

Meeting Date: March 6, 2008

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: Wolf Population Management Plan & Rules

Approved by: ____

Prepared by: Steve Nadeau

Background:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a delisting rule on wolves the end of February 2008. Idaho will take over management 30 days after publication. The Department developed a Draft Wolf Population Management Plan that outlined regulated wolf harvest and population management. The plan went out for public comment and was rewritten and finalized in February. Additionally, basic wolf hunting rules developed for the Plan were presented at the regional open houses in February.

Policy issues:

The Plan is ready for Commission decision on adoption. Commission sets 2008 statewide population goals this meeting. Idaho assumes full management authority March 28. Draft proposed 2008 wolf hunting seasons available for public review in May. Commission decides on final wolf hunting seasons, quotas, rules, etc. in May. Final wolf hunting rules brochure will be available in July.

Public Involvement Process:

A broad-based 7 member stakeholder group was formed to help develop the plan. A public survey was conducted of 1000 Idaho citizens, 1000 hunters, and 1000 livestock producers. The public comment period on the Plan ran 43 days from November 19 through December 31. Ten public open houses were held around the state in November and December and the public was requested to comment on the wolf plan either online or in writing. Staff met with the Nez Perce Tribe and comments were incorporated from a broad base of constituents. General overview of rules was presented during the public big game open houses in all regions. Public will be able to review quotas and rules prior to Commission adoption in May.

Justification:

Our level of management planning and implementation has increased over the last few years, and will continue to do so. The transition to full state management has been ongoing since 2002 and we are now prepared to take over management of wolves as a big game animal upon adoption of Idaho's wolf harvest and population management strategies. The final stages are nearing completion with Commission approval during the next few months.

Action Requested:

Adopt Wolf Population Management Plan. Set statewide population goal. Proceed with public comment on rules brochure and specific harvest recommendations.

Staff Recommendations:

Adopt Wolf Population and Management Plan 2008-2012. Select 2005, 2006, or 2007 population levels to manage for 2008 harvest goals. Direct staff to allocate quotas on the final wolf brochure and rules for final adoption in May.